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ABSTRACT

The work performed by New Jersey's Minimum Basic Skills Advisory Committee in studying the state's remedial programs is described. The committee's findings are summarized, as are its recommendations for enhancing program effectiveness. Descriptions of data collection activities involve interviews with representative school districts, major education associations, and state department of education staff; and literature reviews. Four areas of concern were studied: design, development, and organization of remedial programs; program staffing; local-level organization of programs and personnel; and state responsibility. Twenty-nine observations and findings are noted, and several questionnaires used to collect data are appended. A total of 17 recommendations are presented, including: (1) the responsibility for remediation of basic skills rests with the local district, while the state department of education provides financial, technical, and evaluative services; (2) information is needed concerning the most effective program strategies; (3) funding guidelines should be reviewed; and (4) state efforts should be coordinated with federal funds and programs. (GDC)

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STATUS OF MINIMUM STANDARDS REMEDIAL PROGRAMS IN NEW JERSEY

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FINAL REPORT OF MINIMUM BASIC SKILLS - ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 6, 1978

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RESUME
OF
MINIMUM BASIC SKILLS
TASK FORCE AND COMMITTEES

The presentation of this report to the State Board of Education and to the Commissioner will complete a cycle of task force and Committee activities that have addressed the whole area of minimum basic skills testing in New Jersey. This cycle involved three groups:

- the first to establish appropriate competency standards and indicators
- the second to measure students' skill attainment against those indicators
- and the third to provide recommendations for improvement of remedial instruction for those students whose skill attainment fall below State standards

The following briefly traces the work of these groups.

On November 20, 1975, by Resolution of the State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education, a Task Force on Competency Indicators and Standards was established. This Task Force was charged with the following:

1. Surveying all available research materials on, as well as efforts undertaken in other states toward, the establishment of competency indicators and standards;
2. Recommending policies on local and state competency indicators to the State Board of Education;
3. Recommending a process by which all interested parties might participate in establishing appropriate competency standards and indicators for pupils;
4. Recommending methods for identifying student competencies;
5. Recommending methods for maximizing attainment of each student's achievement of individual objectives.

The Task Force completed its work and presented its findings and recommendations to the State Board of Education and the Commissioner at the October, 1976 State Board meeting.

A copy of the Task Force's study and recommendations is contained in the October, 1976 report, "Task Force on Competency Indicators and Standards - Summary Report".

At the November, 1976 meeting of the State Board of Education a comprehensive Minimum Basic Skills program was adopted. This plan combined recommendations made by the Task Force and the State Department of Education.

On January 5, 1977, the Commissioner of Education announced formation of nine committees to develop an implementation plan for the Minimum Basic Skills program adopted in November.

These groups included:

Advisory Committee
Elementary Math Committee
Elementary Reading Committee
Secondary Math Committee
Secondary Reading Committee
Communication and Life Skills Committee
Minority Advisory Committee
Bilingual Committee
Technical Advisory Committee

After a year's study these committees presented an implementation plan to the State Board at its January, 1978 meeting. This plan was adopted by the Board and resulted in the development of the MBS reading and math tests administered to 3rd, 6th, 9th and 11th grade students in all New Jersey public schools in April, 1978.

This plan is described fully in the April, 1978 report, "State of New Jersey Minimum Basic Skills Program".

Coincident with making its January, 1978 presentation to the Board - the MBS Advisory Committee also asked the Board to extend its life to July 1, 1978. The Committee requested this extension to study the status of remedial programs designed to assist students whose MBS test performance fell below state standards. This request was granted.

A copy of the Board Resolution authorizing this extension is included as Attachment A.

This binder chronicles the work of the Minimun Basic Skills Advisory Committee during the period it studied remedial programs in the State - and includes a summary of its findings and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of these programs.

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INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The material in this binder includes the findings and recommendations of the Minimum Basic Skills Advisory Committee resulting from its inquiry into the status of minimum standards remedial programs in New Jersey's public schools.

This report is submitted at a time when it is abundantly apparent that the need to improve remedial educational programs in our public schools is imperative. Recent Minimum Basic Skills testing scores do not present an encouraging picture - with almost a quarter of the public school students tested failing to attain minimal levels in either reading or math. The results were even poorer in large urban communities where failure rates in the 50% to 60% range were common. The schools in these urban centers serve a large portion of our state's public school students - and their plight is one that should be of alarming concern to everyone.

The Minimum Basic Skills Advisory Committee does not suggest that this report explores in depth all facets of the remedial educational problems in our state. Time constraints did not permit a study of that quality. The Committee does feel, though, that this report is a representative assessment that contains enough information to enforce feelings that serious problems do exist in New Jersey's remedial education program - and that unless extraordinary measures

are employed promptly we will see general conditions worsen - and may well see our larger urban districts fall to virtually irretrievable depths.

While recognizing the fine efforts of dedicated educators engaged in remedial instruction throughout the state and the State Department's current reorganization plans to better serve remedial needs in New Jersey, the findings in this study still indicate the effects of -

- a fragmented management structure with fragmented responsibilities
- a general lack of guidance
- a lack of comprehensive information
- confusion, misunderstanding and resentment

These factors which are present to some degree at all levels are preventing remedial instruction efforts in New Jersey from maximizing their potential - and, unfortunately, at a time when a highly efficient and highly effective effort is most needed.

The Committee feels that while the above findings are very critical of educational authorities throughout the State - others in government must share responsibility for contributing to their negative impact. Key among these are:

- *imprecise and unclear language in Compensatory Education Legislation*

- *the enactment of legislation and the setting of start dates that fail to allow time for adequate program planning and development (e.g. Compensatory Legislation enacted July 1976 for start in September 1976).*
- *inadequate fiscal support for proper program organization, staffing and administration - despite budget requests to the contrary.*
- *confusing and delayed legal directives that caused breakdowns in program timing and procedure.*

These elements will not be commented on elsewhere in this report because they were felt to be beyond the scope of this study. The Committee feels strongly, however, that they should be brought to the attention of the appropriate authorities in government so that people engaged in activities that are in anyway allied to education are aware of the fallout that decisions in these activities can have on educational efforts throughout New Jersey.

The Advisory Committee believes that the recommendations contained in this report present an organized and comprehensive approach for educators to use in attacking the factors hampering remedial instructional efforts - and respectfully asks the State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education to consider this report positively and act on its recommendations promptly.

STUDY APPROACH

In undertaking its study of the status of remedial programs in New Jersey's Public Schools currently - the Minimum Basic Skills Advisory Committee elected to develop input from four areas.

I. Representative school districts
II. Major educational organizations
III. State Department personnel responsible for activities allied to remedial instruction
IV. Literature - Conference Material - Contacts

An expansion of this development follows: -

I. REPRESENTATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

To develop a representative profile of remedial programs in the state and a feel for the perceptions held on these programs - the Committee felt that it needed input from local districts which have had experience with State Compensatory Education, Title I, and other remedial instruction programs.

To draw on this experience the Department of Education was requested to develop a list of school districts representing a cross section of districts in the State based on size,

type, student achievement, and socio-economic status. From this list - and with advice from appropriate county offices - the Committee selected eight school districts for interview. These included:

Delsey Regional High School
Hackensack
Independence Township
Mullica Township
Newark
Paterson
Sayreville
Vineland

Additional facts on these eight school districts are included in Attachment B.

Details on Interviews

- Interviews with the eight districts were conducted during April and May.
- Each district was represented by a group of school personnel from administrative, program development, and teacher levels.
- Prior to the interviews - each school district received a questionnaire asking for information in the following general areas:
  - How are local remediation needs indentified or assessed?

- How are remediation needs addressed?
- How are remediation programs administered
- How are remediation programs evaluated?
- What is the future of remedial program in your district/school?
- How could the program be better served?
- Why do you think the program works - or doesn't work?

As can be seen in the full questionnaire found in Attachment C - four to six sub-questions were asked in each of the above general areas.

II. MAJOR EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Because of the statewide importance of remedial instruction and the far reaching implications that any study or proposed action might have in this vital area - the Committee requested a number of major educational organizations in the State for their input. Three organizations responded - These were:

New Jersey Education Association
New Jersey School Boards Association
New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers

Details on Interviews

Each of the above organizations had representatives appear before the Committee - present its position or comments on remedial

instruction - and then answered questions posed by Committee members.

III. STATE DEPARTMENT INTERVIEWS

Study input was also developed from State Department of Education personnel who are responsible for activities allied to remedial instruction programs. These interviews involved the offices of State Compensatory Education, Title I, State Testing Program and the Bureau of Basic Skills.

Details on Interview

State Department personnel appeared before the Committee to explain the responsibilities and activities of each office - and then answered questions posed by Committee members.

IV. LITERATURE - CONFERENCE MATERIAL - CONTACTS

The input developed from the interview with school districts, educational groups and State Department personnel was augmented by studying current literature, reviewing recent conference material, and informal contacts with school people of other States who were responsible for developing and administering remedial instruction programs.

The Committee particularly benefited from having several of its members and staff attend the Research for Better School's Conference, "Improving Basic Skills Instruction: Problems and Needs". A wealth of conference material and literature was distributed at this conference which was then shared and discussed with the full Committee membership. Further, attendance at this conference provided a valuable opportunity for discussion with school people from other states - particularly Pennsylvania and Delaware - who were also involved with remedial instruction concerns.

AREAS OF CONCERN

At the conclusion of the data gathering phase of its activities - the Committee then set about organizing the information gathered. While the volume of this information was considerable - it quite logically fell into four general areas of concern -

A - The Design, Development and Organization of Remedial Instruction Programs.

B - The Staffing of Remedial Programs.

C - The Organization of Programs and Personnel at the local level.

D - The Responsibility of the State Department in the Area of Remedial Instruction.

Each of these areas of concern was then assigned to a sub-committee for further study and analysis. The product of each sub-committee's work was then reviewed and edited by the entire Advisory Committee.

Narratives on these four areas of concern follow. These narratives summarize input the Committee received on -

- The more prevalent perspectives held on remedial instruction.
- Problems encountered in working with remedial programs.
- Information relating to the manner the State Department is handling activities relating to remedial instruction.

A. THE DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANIZATION OF REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

According to the Minimum Standards legislation outlined in the amendments to the T&E Act, the responsibility for the remediation of basic skills rests with the local school district. The role of the State Department of Education, its County Offices, and its Educational Improvement Centers is to provide the fiscal resources, operational guidelines, service, and technical assistance to local school districts as well as to monitor the effectiveness of their remedial programs.

In the process of the interviews with local districts it quickly became apparent that local districts feel comfortable in exercising the autonomy granted them with the current legislation. They feel it permits them to develop programs of remedial instruction specifically tailored to the unique characteristics of each local district.

Most of the districts interviewed indicated that while they enjoyed this autonomy there was a need to have more program information and technical assistance made available to them.

The districts also expressed a desire that the State Department of Education be more consistent and precise in the use of language within its directives. For example -

Following the prescriptions of the Minimum Standards legislation, the Administrative Code requires all remedial and preventative programs undertaken with Compensatory Education funds be "supplemental" to the regular instructional program.

Local districts reported confusion about the language of the Code - and difficulties working within what they understood to be the intent of the Code. For example -

If "supplemental" means in the strictest sense of the word instruction which is provided "in addition to" the regular instructional program of the school, then problems such as inadequate plant facilities, split sessions, and budgetary caps may render it difficult or impossible for districts to live within the letter of the Code's language.

If, on the other hand, "supplemental" implies merely a specially-designed program of instruction intended to correct student deficiencies by:

(1) modifying instructional modes and materials and

(2) utilizing specially trained personnel -

then most districts do not have difficulties functioning with the Code's intent.

The Committee found that almost every district interviewed was utilizing programs built upon either "in-class" or "pull-out" strategies for program development. Proponents of each strategy are strongly convinced of the worth of their strategy over the other because they feel it relates better to the particular needs of the students within their district. While both "pull-out" and "in-class" methods are being used effectively - there is some feeling that the "pull-out" strategy, particularly when used in larger districts, does increase the likelihood of a breakdown in coordination between the regular classroom and remedial teachers.

The Committee found that while the type of instructional program selected by a local district was important - the elements most critical to a program's success is the degree of involvement and committment of the school staff to the program.

Schools with the more successful remedial programs involve school staff of all levels (administrative, program development and teachers) in their program development - and maintain a regular schedule for reviewing and updating their programs.

Many districts experience difficulty in meshing their remedial program with their regular developmental program. The districts interviewed feel this difficulty is due to not involving all levels of staff in developing a remedial program - and then not keeping all staff fully advised of the program's progress or changes.

It is important that there be open and frank communication between teachers of both regular and remedial programs. This communication is particularly helpful when directed towards meeting individual student needs.

More successful district programs utilize plans whereby student achievement of previously taught material is assessed before going on to advanced material. This is particularly necessary when students are promoted from one grade to another or move from one school to another. Utilization of such a plan alerts a teacher to a student's lack of knowledge in a subject at a stage when a deficiency may be less pronounced. This might offset the need for more concentrated remedial instruction at a later date. While such a plan is necessary at all levels - it should be particularly stressed in the lower elementary grades.

Attention must be paid to the maintenance of student records used to monitor pupil progress and achievement. Such record keeping is essential in order to do the following:

1. Measure growth
2. Plan specific strategies
3. Match materials to the learner
4. Assist in determining the best learning mode for the pupil
5. Keep parents informed

Districts who appear to be doing better remedial work have developed programs that employ a wide variety of techniques, methodologies, and strategies. The use of varied resources is designed not only to engage and excite the learner, but also allows for the tailoring of instruction that is in harmony with the pupil's style of learning.

The Committee also noted an absence of specific criteria and procedures for validating pupils out of remedial programs. If districts are not provided with strong procedural guidelines a two-fold problem exists. The first is that districts may unnecessarily retain students in remedial programs rather than risk any liability in placing them back into the regular developmental program. Secondly, a number of districts feel the present programs were an "all-or-nothing" strategy. That is, no formal provision has been made to provide for "maintenance of effort" programs intended for students who could move profitably back into the developmental program if they were given an opportunity for periodic review and restrengthening of their skills. Consideration must be given to transitional programming.

Currently, little effort is being made to conduct formal evaluations of remedial programs. This is an area in which the State Department of Education must assume a leadership role. The Department should be responsible for collecting and/or developing evaluation procedures.

In addition, the Educational Improvement Centers might provide technical assistance and/or workshop experiences for local district personnel to train them in the process of conducting program evaluation.

Problems also exist with regard to the use of test data for the purpose of program and student-progress evaluation. Specific problems posed included:

1. Not getting test data back in time for scheduling students for the coming year.
2. The unavailability of district-wide test results prior to the due date of the Annual Report.
3. The inadequacy of test data as a sole basis for conducting program evaluation.

There is also great concern that students within the remedial programs not become negatively labled or stigmatized. While this is a problem which is encountered with any grouping strategy - it is generally felt that this problem should be emphasized and that guidelines be developed stressing that all school staff work to insure that remedial training does not become an irreversible way of life for any student.

B. LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY ORGANIZATION

One of the findings derived from the interviews with local districts was that the effectiveness with which districts deliver the remedial services is related directly to their ability to organize themselves effectively for this purpose. The ability involves six areas -

- Federal, state, local program coordination
- In-service training
- Parental involvement
- Good attendance (both teachers and students)
- Information management
- Communication

An expansion of each of these areas follows:

Federal, State, Local Program Coordination

As the total program of basic skills remediation currently exists, both funds and procedural guidelines come from three diverse sources; federal (Title I), state (State Compensatory Education) and local (with monies either from local budgets or from special grants).

The Committee found that some, particularly the large urban districts, experienced difficulties in integrating and coordinating these diverse programs into a coherent, effective program. Clearly, work needs to be done both at the State and federal level with regard to this problem.

Other portions of this report will deal with the need for closer integration of federal and state program guidelines.

In Service Training

The matter of in-service training is of concern to many local districts. Many otherwise strong and experienced teachers are unfamilar with the techniques and methodologies peculiar to remedial instruction. There is a need not only to train those individuals who will directly provide the remedial instruction, but also to provide proper orientation for the remainder of the teaching and administrative staff. Because poor in-service training is probably more destructive in its final effects than is no in-service training at all, districts should devote careful attention to the planning and follow-up of in-service instruction.

Parental Involvement

A third organizational challenge for the local district is to establish programs which will actively involve the parents/guardians of students receiving remedial instruction. Some districts provide a summary orientation for all parents covering the goals and methodologies of the remedial program.

Good Attendance

An additional organizational challenge that the Committee noted concerned increasing the level of attendance of both students and staff. The Committee noted that, obviously, instruction can not go on when either the student or the teacher is absent. Currently, some urban districts are experiencing student absenteeism in excess of 16%, and staff absenteeism in excess of 9%. Specific programs, such as the Teacher Attendance Improvement Program successfully piloted in Newark and Ewing Township, the "New Model Me" program, "Project Form", and the "Hazlet Counselor Advisor" program have demonstrated the capacity districts have to make inroads into the critical problem of attendance.

Information Management

The handling of the large quantities of data generated both by testing and remedial programs is a growing problem. Many districts report that they are already experiencing information overload. It seems certain even greater quantities of data will be generated as districts move more completely into testing/remedial programs.

As the costs of automated data processing equipment and services are very expensive when purchased or contracted on a single-user basis, it seems imperative that ways be developed for districts to work in groups to obtain automated data management capabilities.

The sections of this report which deal with staffing and with the role of the State Department of Education will provide additional thoughts on this information management challenge.

Communication

All districts stressed the need for good communication between all school staff - especially in the area relating to remedial instruction. The communication in the development of any remedial program must include:

- the continuing cooperation between regular and remedial teachers.
- ready access to information on both program and individual progress.
- the constant evaluation and updating of programs.
- and then communication of this information to all staff.

C. THE STAFFING OF REMEDIAL PROGRAMS

Quite obviously programs that provide remedial instruction can be no more successful than the competence of the people who staff them. The problems of staffing revolve around four key areas of concern. They are:

- Program Administration and Supervision
- Qualifications of Instructional Personnel
- Roles for Clerical and Teacher Aides
- Improved In-service Training

An expansion of each of these areas follows:

Program Administration and Supervision

Because of the special qualities needed to administer a remedial program, local districts must take great care in the selection of people responsible for supervising and implementing this instruction. These people should have proven ability as administrators and demonstrate the sensitivity and concern that are vital to effectively relating to the special needs of remedial groups.

Qualifications of Instructional Personnel

While it would be desirable, it is currently impractical to require that all teaching personnel involved in remedial programs be trained in remedial instruction. An immediate goal of the State Department should be to develop a program to increase the availability

of people with expertise in remedial instruction. Whatever resources are needed to attain this goal should be provided. In the meantime, local districts when selecting people to work in their remedial programs should look for the following qualities and abilities:

- a sensitivity to the needs of students in remedial groups
- a positive attitude toward pupil progress
- an ability to communicate with students and parents
- an ability to relate well to other staff personnel
- the flexibility to deal with individual student remedial needs

Roles of Clerical and Teacher Aides

In order to relieve remedial teachers of many tasks that take from instruction time, local districts might consider the use of:

- clerical help to relieve the teacher of much of the paper work required by remedial programs
- teacher instructional aides to assist remedial teachers in many classroom activities (e.g. helping individual students with special problems - preparing program material - supervising study periods)

Improved In-Service Training

Effective in-service training is important to the success of the remedial program in any school. General in-service activities and follow-up involving school administrators, supervisors, guidance counselors, subject matter specialists and all teachers must be an integral part of a school's overall remedial program.

Local districts also feel that schools of education should acquaint students studying to be teachers with the "real world of teaching." This might be done with "interning" experiences which might particularly involve participants in working with students who have learning dificiencies and who require remedial instruction.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

As mentioned previously, the Minimum Standards Testing legislation specifically places responsibility for providing remedial instruction to those students who fall below the minimal cut off levels with the local districts. Local districts require strong support from the State Department of Education to handle this responsibility effectively.

The role of the State Department of Education is to provide funding, program guidance, technical assistance and monitoring. In order for the state to effectively carry out this role it must:

- Develop and maintain a strong sense of its proper purpose and role.

- Collect and disseminate information related to providing effective remedial instruction.
- Be cognizant of the diverse socio-economic and political diversity which exists in local districts across the state.
- Develop guidelines and enabling processes which clearly delineate the intent of the compensatory program.
- Establish the type of effective working relationships with the local districts that will permit the state to provide quality technical assistance.

In this context, the State Department of Education's operating role functions at four levels. They are described as follows:

(1) Fiscal Functions - Determining what constitutes the most effective targeting of financial resources to address the skill deficiencies of the children.

(2) Service Functions - Providing the types of direct technical assistance to local districts that will most effectively carry out the intent of the Compensatory Education Legislation.

(3) Research Functions - Determing what type of research and research findings would be most productive and valuable to the local districts.

(4) Monitoring Functions - Establishing the most effective type of monitoring to check the progress of local districts in providing remedial instruction and in correcting basic skills deficiencies.

The Committee reviewed the role the State Department of Education has assumed and found that its performance needs improving in a number of key areas.

The first of these was its imprecise use of language. The Committee felt that the State Department of Education was not as clear, precise and consistent in its communications with local districts as it might be. Of particular difficulty was the lack of clarity and consistency in spelling out the types of working relationships that are permissable between federal, categorical programs and State Compensatory Education programs. Much of this difficulty is caused by restrictions imposed by federal regulations despite State Department efforts to ameliorate them.

This problem is made worse by district people not knowing what office in the Department to contact for clarification. Adequate fiscal support to permit the establishment of a Compensatory Education office would have prevented this frustration.

Further, as mentioned earlier, the Department must look to clarifying the intent of language in the T&E legislation and the Administrative Code.

A second area was that of timing. There is strong indication that the State Department does not concern itself enough with the time requirements imposed upon local districts and the ability of the districts to comply with those time requirements. This lack has caused reduced effectiveness of service and action at both the State Department and local district levels.

Another area involved that of providing technical assistance to local districts. In particular, the Committee felt the Department had not addressed itself to an overall program that would allow local districts to benefit from the more than a decade of national experience in providing remedial instruction. These years of experience indicate that a large body of effective materials and working models have already been developed concerning corrective/remedial education. The State Department of Education must gather and make available to local districts information concerning needs assessment patterns, instructional patterns and strategies, board policies, organizational patterns, and program evaluation models that relate to the provision of remedial education. Such a service would greatly aid local districts in the development of more effective remedial programs.

Another factor which the Committee feels has limited the effectiveness of the Department in supporting the development of remedial programs has been the operational weakness of its own organization. This weakness is caused mainly by understaffing and the fact that because of this understaffing so many responsibilities related to remedial education have been diffused across the Department. The Committee feels strongly that if the Department is to meet the growing challenges of remedial education it must immediately strengthen and integrate its presently diffused and understaffed efforts.

The last area - and one that concerned the Committee greatly - was a mutual air of resentment that seems to be growing between the Department and local districts. Department personnel criticize local districts for poor administration and management. Local districts blame the Department for lack of understanding of local problems and lack of leadership. These attitudes hamper progress.

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

1. Local school districts are trying to cope with their remedial problems with a variety of programs.

2. Local districts must decide on the type of remedial program they will use. The type programs used vary greatly even among districts with similar characteristics. Without comprehensive technical assistance and guidance, the effectiveness of a local district's program is dependent entirely on the degree of the local commitment and the local expertise available to organize and maintain it.

3. Size of a school district obviously plays a big part in the district's ability to handle its remedial problems. Smaller districts seem to have fewer problems regardless of the type of program employed. Larger districts have more problems while the large urban districts have many problems.

4. Local districts need clarification of language used in both the T&E legislation and Administrative Code.

5. The problem of language misunderstanding is compounded by imprecise and unclear wording of State Department letters and directives.

6. Local districts are in need of a lot of technical assistance in the development, staffing, and operation of their remedial programs. Examples of the sort of assistance needed:

- guidelines on how to develop an effective remedial instruction program.
- information on remedial programs and procedures that have been used effectively elsewhere over the past decade.
- information on techniques, methodology and strategies available for use in remedial instruction.
- information on in-service training of school staff as it relates to the development of remedial programs.
- information on how best to integrate developmental and remedial training.
- information on record keeping programs for students in remedial programs.

7. A program must be developed to effectively monitor and evaluate remedial programs uniformly across the State.

8. Local districts need procedures on how to validate students out of remedial programs. Rather than risk any liability districts might keep students in remedial instruction programs indefinitely.

9. Advice and guidance on how to work a student out of remedial training back into the regular education program is needed.

10. Counseling within the local district is needed on how best to handle remedial instruction so as not to stigmatize students.

11. Local districts need help in integrating and coordinating diverse remedial programs in schools (e.g. Title I, Comp Ed., Local).

12. Local districts also need guidance on the type of information and material that should be included in on-going in-service training sessions on remedial education.

13. There is a need for information on how best to involve parents in remedial programs. Should schools hold programs for parents? If so, what might these programs include?

14. More information on programs to improve both teacher and student attendance is required. Progress in remedial instruction is hampered by either teacher or student absence.

15. Local districts need help in handling the "volumes of data" required with remedial education. Many districts need, but can't afford, automated data facilities.

16. Because of the overall sensitivities required in remedial instruction, some guidelines indicating the qualities to be looked for in remedial instructors should be provided.

17. There is a need for more teachers with qualifications in remedial instruction. Local districts interviewed feel a program should be undertaken to increase the number of these people as soon as possible.

18. Local districts are concerned that too much of a remedial teacher's time is consumed with non-teaching responsibilities.

19. Despite the above concern, some districts are confused about using clerical assistance and teacher aides to relieve the remedial teacher of non teaching chores. Guidelines are needed.

20. Local districts are concerned that new teachers are not adequately trained to come into today's educational world. They feel educational colleges might use more "interning" experiences as part of their teacher training program to better acquaint new teachers with the real world of education, and particularly that world dealing with students who have learning deficiences.

21. Time constraints placed on local districts by the State Department for studies or reports are often unreasonable and tend to upset a district's operations.

22. Too often, the need for the information being sought by either the State Department or local district is not explained.

23. The responsibility for remedial educational activities has been too diffused within the State Department.

24. This diffusion of responsibility within the Department has resulted in a duplication of requests for information, confusing instructions, and difficulty in knowing where to turn to resolve questions. The Department has recently centralized this responsibility in the newly structured School Program office. This centralization should be helpful.

25. Understaffing of State Department and local district offices responsible for remedial educational activities is seen as a serious problem.

26. There is a growing breakdown in relations and a growing lack of understanding of each other's problems between the local districts and the State Department of Education.

27. There is confusion about the role of the E.I.C. offices - particularly as it relates to remedial education.

28. Throughout the study, there were few references to funding inadequacies. When the matter was discussed, it was not emphasized nearly as strongly as was expected, nor nearly as strongly as many of the foregoing items listed.

29. While the Committee perceives that remedial dollar distribution needs to be reviewed, there are so many interacting issues and problems that it was not possible to derive specific and supportable conclusions on funding level or methods of distribution.

RECOMMENDATIONS ***

1. All public school educators must dedicate themselves to the intent of the Minimum Skills legislation and the Administrative Code as it relates to remedial instruction.

   The roles of the local districts and the State Department are clearly defined.

   The responsibility for the remediation of basic skills rests with the local school district.

   The responsibility of the State Department of Education, its County offices and Educational Improvement Center is to provide the fiscal resources, operational guidelines, service and technical assistance to local school districts - as well as to monitor the effectiveness of their remedial programs.

*** *While these recommendations may have implied application to other areas of educational responsibility - they are intended only to relate to the Advisory Committee's area of concern - Remedial Education in New Jersey.*

2. Each local district should look to recent skills achievement levels, the most recent MBS scores of its students and other related criteria to objectively evaluate the effectiveness of its remedial instruction program.

3. The State Department must strengthen its capacity to provide technical assistance and program support for the remedial efforts of local districts.

4. This report recognizes current plans to reorganize the State Department of Education to centralize the responsibility for all remedial instructional matters under the newly formed School Program office. This reorganization should be completed as soon as possible.

5. This office should be adequately staffed with qualified people who are experienced in remedial programs and whose interested and helpful manner will develop a growing spirit of cooperation between the State Department and local districts on remedial education matters.

6. This School Program office should immediately address some of the needs expressed in the "Observations and Findings" section of this report such as:

- determining from local districts specific

instances where inconsistencies in State Department correspondence is causing a problem. An effort should be made to correct this problem - as well as those surrounding the misunderstanding of intent in some of the language in the T&E legislation and Administrative Code.

- the concerns about the State Department's placing unreasonable time constraints on local districts for studies and reports.

- pursuing a program to meet local district concern that there should be more teachers available with remedial expertise.

7. The foregoing will undoubtedly help local districts and help in the overall relations between local districts and the State Department. However, it is the opinion of this study that much stronger efforts are required for dealing with today's remedial problems than have been utilized to date. The size and complexity of remedial problems in many areas of our state have already gotten out of hand, and it is time that a more comprehensive and coordinated approach at all levels be taken to cope with them.

To this end - the Commissioner of Education should immediately form a Technical Adivsory Committee to work with the new School Program office to study and develop the sort of expertise, information and strategies required to effectively deal with - and hopefully reduce - remedial instruction needs in New Jersey.

8. This new Advisory Committee should be made up of, but not limited to, educators from the State Department of Education, a representative sampling of local districts, representatives from higher education, and representatives from business and the community.

9. This new Technical Advisory Committee and the new School Program organization should jointly explore the development of comprehensive information for local districts to use in developing, staffing and maintaining maximally effective remedial programs.

10. This study has developed a list of key areas in which this type of professional and comprehensive information is most needed. These are included in the following three recommendations and work in these areas should start promptly.

11. In the area of Development and Organization of Remedial Programs - comprehensive information should be developed with respect to the following:

a) the relationship and relative merits of "pull out" and "in class" approaches

b) the relationship and relative merits of "supplemental", "replacement" and "modified regular" strategies.

c) the relationship between developmental and remedial programs.

d) the desirability of different remediation programs and teaching techniques for students with different needs.

e) the need and manner of how best to provide K-12 curriculum coordination.

f) all issues related to student tracking and grouping.

g) the maintenance of pupil records.

h) the appropriate number and use of available resources (personnel, materials, community and technical assistance).

i) the appropriate criteria and procedures to use in exiting students from remedial programs.

j) guidelines for the monitoring of remedial programs.

k) the timely and appropriate evaluation of remediation programs.

l) how to interpret and use evaluation results.

12. In the area of Local Staffing of Remedial Programs - comprehensive information is needed on the following:

a) guidelines to assist in the development of positive attitudes and open communication between remediation and developmental teaching and administrative personnel

b) guidelines to identify appropriate remediation teacher competencies.

c) guidelines to assist in the provision of effective pre-service and in-service training and follow-up for both program staff and administrators.

d) guidelines to assist in the setting of standards and procedures for the selection of teachers and administrators of remedial programs.

13. In the area of Local District Organization - comprehensive information is needed on -

a) the desireability of locally set goals and objectives on remediation efforts.

b) how best to provide for good school/community communications.

c) the need for parent training to help students in basic skill areas.

d) the relationship of district size to the development and administration of remedial programs.

e) the need for data management/computer support capacity (data processing and retrieval) for administration and pupil record keeping.

f) the relationship between a local district's fiscal well being and the organization and delivery of remediation programs.

Comment:

The development of all of the material included in the last three recommendations will make for a great deal of work. However, if the growing and complex needs of remediation are to be stemmed - it will require this sort of concentrated and professional attention. The local districts have neither the time nor the capabilities to provide this sort of information for themselves. The State Department of Education must furnish it.

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14. The State office responsible for remedial programs should also set out to collect information on remedial efforts and procedures that have been used effectively over the past decade. Such a collection of information would have two purposes:

- it would be available for local district use now.

- it would serve as valuable input for the new Advisory Committee to use in its development of the comprehensive information on remedial instruction matters covered in the foregoing recommendations.

The State Department must be given fiscal resources to accomplish this effort.

15. It is the opinion of this study that the State Department should seek review of the present funding formula used in the distribution of State Compensatory Education support. There is concern as to -

a) how much latitude should be given to local districts to allow the enrollment of any student who scores above state minimum standards in State and Federal remedial programs.

b) whether or not districts should be able to receive additional funds to support their efforts to instruct students who have fallen below the cut-off levels in <u>both</u> language skills and math skills of MBS testing.

c) what are the special needs of districts with rapidly growing or changing enrollments.

16. It is also the opinion of this study that the State Department should develop some guidelines dealing with -

    a) local districts who continually have unsuccessful remedial programs.

    b) local districts where the student population in remediation continually exceeds that of the regular education population. Some consideration must be given to establishing check points where the regular education programs are acknowledged to be ineffective and must be changed.

17. The State Department should pursue further efforts with the Federal Government to see what can be done to allow for better integration and coordination of Title I and Compensatory Education programs. The current incompatibility of the ground rules for operating the two programs results in inefficient use of personnel and dollars.

ATTACHMENTS

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Minimum Standards Advisory Committee has fully and completely carried out their charge for the development of minimum standards examinations, and

WHEREAS, this committee is composed of representatives of all elements of the educational community and the public, and

WHEREAS, this committee is well qualified to address the matter of basic skills remediation and has indicated their willingness and desire to address this topic, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the New Jersey State Board of Education extend the charter of the Minimum Standards Advisory Committee until July 1, 1978, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that this committee will inquire as to the status of minimum standards remedial programs in the state and report to the State Board of Education in July 1978 with their recommendations.

Ruth J. Mancuso
President, State Board of Education

Fred G. Burke
Secretary, State Board of Education

January 11, 1978

MINIMUM STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE REMEDIATION

List of Schools Interviewed

DISTRICT	COUNTY	TYPE SCHOOL	ENROLLMENT	% MINORITY ENROLLMENT	*DFG	COMMUNITY TYPE
Delsa Regional High School	Gloucester	7-12	1,716	17.0	A	Rural
Hackensack	Bergen	K-12	5,537	37.1	D	Urban Center
Independence Township	Warren	K-8	244	2.2	C	Rural
Mullica Township	Atlantic	K-8	865	36.0	B	Rural
Newark	Essex	K-12	70,432	90.1	A	Urban Center
Paterson	Passic	K-12	27,983	81.4	A	Urban Center
Sayreville	Middlesex	K-12	6,511	2.1	D	Surburban Rural
Vineland	Cumberland	K-12	11,889	38.0	B	Urban Center

*DFG or "district factor grouping" is a statisically-derived indicator which provides a comparative measure of the socio-economic status of the citizens living within a school district. The index runs "A" thru "I" with "A" indicating the lowest and "H" the highest relative socio-economic status.

C

District Name:_____ Representatives:_____

County Name:_____ _____

Date:_____ _____

1. HOW ARE REMEDIATION NEEDS IDENTIFIED OR ASSESSED?

A. Methods/instruments

B. Criteria(cut-off score, other)

C. Frequency and scheduling

D. Responsibility for conducting and interpreting assessment

E. Other

District name:_____

2. HOW ARE REMEDIATION NEEDS ADDRESSED?

A. Describe Programs currently used(including how program was selected and how long its been used in the school/district/grade-level)

B. Instructional methods used

C. How long students stay in program -- how is enrollment terminated?

D. Other

DIstrict Name:_____

3. HOW ARE REMEDIATION PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED?

A. Who coordinates program within school and within district

B. Area of certification/training of remediation staff

C. Average student/teacher ratio

D. Relationship to school's developmental programs in reading and math

E. Parental or community involvement

F. Method of charting and reporting pupil progress

G. Other

DISTRICT NAME:_____

4. HOW ARE REMEDIATION PROGRAMS EVALUATED?

A. Methods

B. Individual or group responsible

C. What type of data are collected

D. How are evaluation results used

E. Other

DISTRICT NAME:_____

5. WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE REMEDIAL PROGRAM IN YOUR DISTRICT (SCHOOL)?

A. Do you anticipate an increase or decrease in the number of students in need?

B. Is the funding mechanism secure for next year?

C. What modifications ,if any, are planned(did you use evaluation results to determine this)?

D. Are you planning any new programs in remediation -- where(subject/grade),why,etc.?

E. Other

DISTRICT NAME: _____

6. HOW COULD THE PROGRAM BE BETTER SERVED?

A. What kind of technical assistance would be helpful (provided by whom)?

B. How could the current funding system be more helpful?

C. Do you feel the current program design, including evaluation, is appropriate and/or adequate to meet your students and staff's needs?

Other

DISTRICT NAME:_____

7. WHY DO YOU THINK YOUR PROGRAM WORKS -- or DOESN'T WORK?

8. General comments and summary